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(54) Title: **CHIMERIC GB VIRUS B (GBV-B)**

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates generally to the fields of biochemistry, molecular biology, and virology. More particularly, it relates to the identification of GB virus B (GBV-B)/HCV chimeras. The invention involves nucleic acid constructs and compositions encoding GBV-B/HCV chimera, including at least part of a 5' NTR derived from a HCV 5' NTR. This construct, and chimeric versions of it, may be employed to study GBV-B and related hepatitis family members, such as hepatitis C virus. The invention thus includes methods of preparing GBV-B/HCV chimeric sequences, constructs, and viruses, as well as methods of employing these compositions.

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